

1/29/14

Good Morning,

My name is Bryan Bentley, and I live in Plymouth Township.

I would like to thank Chairman Heise, and the rest of the Criminal Justice Committee for taking the time to hear my testimony on behalf of HB5110.

House Bill 5110 is known in 14 other states as The Kelsey Smith Act. For those of you who do not know her story, Kelsey Smith died on June 2, 2007 just days after she graduated from high school in Overland Park, Kansas.

She went to a Target store on a Saturday to buy an anniversary gift for her boyfriend. When she didn't return home when expected, her parents immediately became concerned. Call it parent's intuition, but they felt something was wrong. Kelsey's father, a former Police Officer, immediately alerted authorities, who went to the Target store, where video surveillance showed a man following her out of the store, forcing her into her car, and driving off.

Law enforcement made a call to Verizon wireless with a request to ping the location of her cell phone. Despite efforts by law enforcement, and eventually the FBI, it took 4 days before Verizon would release the location of her cell phone.

When the information was released to law enforcement, it took authorities 45 minutes to locate her body 20 miles away. Nobody knows for sure if receiving that information would have saved her life and forensics suggest that it may not have, but it surely would have saved Greg and Missey Smith 4 days of anguish.

Edwin Hall, who raped, sodomized, and then strangled Kelsey was arrested on the evening that they found her body, and is serving life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Since that time, Greg and Missey Smith dedicated themselves to acting on behalf of their daughter in an effort to see that others may be saved. Their group is called Kelsey's Army, and many of the members are those that helped in the search efforts.

Kelsey's Army does many things. They conduct safety awareness seminars at schools, colleges, and businesses. They sponsor self-defense and evade classes. They also began an effort to urge legislators to enact legislation like the Kelsey Smith Act.

This bill has been passed in 14 states so far, and has passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in each state. In Tennessee, it was actually unanimously supported by both the House and the Senate.

This law does not cost taxpayers a dime.

This law does not endanger anyone's privacy, in any way. Nobody can look at your text messages.

Nobody can look at who you are calling. It is simply designed to locate a cell phone in the event of an emergency that endangers a person's life.

This law has already worked in a variety of ways. A stroke victim who was able to place a call to his wife, but unable to speak. His location was given, and help arrived in time to save his life. In another example, just weeks after the Kelsey Smith Act was passed in Tennessee, a child was located and saved from a man who had been charged with 10 previous crimes against children.

If this law saves one life, or one child from unspeakable cruelties, our time and effort will have been well spent.

I spoke with Plymouth Township Police Chief, Thomas Tiderington, and he communicated to me that he would indeed endorse this law, and would consider it a valuable tool for law enforcement in their efforts to possibly saving a life.

In closing, I would like to thank Representative Heise for taking this on. I came to him with a story that I had written about the Smiths, and told him how strongly I felt about the need for the Kelsey Smith Act here in Michigan. He gave it fair consideration, and decided to take this on, and he has done all of the work to get us to this point.

I urge you to vote in favor of HB5110, and I will gladly make myself available in any way to help move this bill forward.

Thank You,

Bryan Bentley

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